



## Senator Tim Sheldon

**35th Legislative District**

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# 2005 Legislative Report

*Dear Neighbor:*

*The Legislature adjourned on time! Now the bad news: Higher taxes will affect every citizen.*

*For my constituents with long commutes, high gas prices are a real pocketbook issue. Gas prices will also drive up the cost of groceries and all consumer goods.*

*I voted against new taxes because our local economy is still suffering and higher taxes will slow economic recovery.*

*It is an honor to represent you in the Senate. I work across party lines and this often angers my party. But politics must take a back seat if problems are going to be solved in Olympia.*

*As always, I welcome your comments. I look forward to hearing from you and to seeing you in the district.*

*Sincerely,*

*Tim Sheldon*  
State Senator, 35th Legislative District

## Here's my voting record on the major issues of the 2005 session:

### New Taxes (SB 6090)

#### I voted NO

The Senate voted 25-22 in favor of levying \$500 million in new taxes. This budget is full of gimmicks such as not fully funding state workers' pensions. It funds state programs at unsustainable levels and it passes the fiscal problems facing our state on to the future. I opposed this measure because I believe it is important for the state to live within its means, just like families do.

### Suspending Initiative 601 (SB 6078)

#### I voted NO

Passed by the voters in 1993, Initiative 601 set reasonable spending limits for state government to live with-in. It also required a two-thirds vote by the Legislature to raise taxes. This bill gutted the people's initiative and allows Olympia to raise new taxes with a simple-majority vote. The Farm Bureau, Washington State Grange and other groups are challenging this suspension of the people's initiative in court.

(continued)

# Here's my voting record on the major issues



## Election Reform



### I voted YES

As a result of the closest governor's race in state history, the Legislature passed a series of election reform bills to standardize election procedures and strengthen voter registration records. Most of the election problems originated in King County, the only one of Washington's 39 counties that has a political appointee overseeing elections, not an elected county auditor.

## Mental Health Parity (SB 5763)



### I voted YES

This bill requires all health plans regulated by the state to provide mental health services on the same basis as other health services. As a result, people will get help sooner and avoid more costly treatments later on.

## Gasoline Tax (SB 6103)

### I voted NO

This bill increases the state gas tax — which is currently 28 cents per gallon — by 9.5 cents over four years. It also imposes new weight fees on passenger cars and light trucks, increasing vehicle registration costs by as much as \$30 per year. To many of my constituents — such as frequent commuters or couples on fixed incomes — this dramatic increase is unacceptable. Passage of this tax increase means Washington will have the third highest gas tax in the United States.

## California Car Emissions (HB 1397)

### I voted NO

This legislation imposes strict, California-style emission standards on new cars, sport utility vehicles and light trucks sold in our state. Some experts predict the cost of these new emission devices will add \$3,000 to the cost of a new car and do very little to improve air quality. Why should we follow California, especially if it means our selection of vehicles could be limited? It doesn't make sense, so I voted no.



# of the 2005 session:

## Fight Meth Production (HB 2266)



Over-the-counter medication containing potential meth ingredients will be closely monitored as a result of this bill. Customers will sign a log and show photo identification. Meth addiction and production is extremely high in the 35th District. This bill will help law enforcement identify people buying cold and allergy medications for use in meth labs.

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## Transportation Improvements (SB 6091)



I fought hard to have local projects included in the state highway construction budget. The budget includes safety projects at Imperial Way on state Route 3 (SR 3) and includes \$15 million in improvements to SR 3 through Belfair.

The budget includes funding for a new Belfair bypass. It also includes funding for safety improvements at Lynch Road and Highway 101, completion of the interchange at Highway 3 and Highway 101 and \$12 million for replacement of the Purdy Creek bridge, which was built in 1932. Extensive new paving and intersection improvements throughout the 35th District will soon begin.

I used all the bipartisan influence and negotiating skills I have to secure these safety improvements for the 35th District. King County will receive roughly half of the \$8.5 billion in highway and bridge improvements, but we will also get our share.

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## Improving Hood Canal (HB 2081 and HB 2097)



High levels of dissolved oxygen in Hood Canal are nothing new. Scientists are studying the problem and we can all educate ourselves on practices that will prevent nitrogen from draining into the canal. However, the state must be a partner with local communities to develop an



Sen. Tim Sheldon speaks on the floor of the Senate

effective program. My amendment to HB 2097 ensures local control is not superseded by Olympia bureaucrats.

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## Construction Budget (SB 6094)



The \$3.3 billion, two-year construction budget for schools, universities, community colleges, parks and other projects passed the Senate 46-2. It includes \$3.5 million for a humanities building at Olympic College in Bremerton. It also includes \$5 million for South Puget Sound Community College, \$10 million for regional water and sewer projects in Shelton, \$16 million for sewers in Belfair and \$3.4 million for 120 new beds at Mission Creek Corrections Center. This is a good mix of projects and jobs for our district.



## Gay Rights (HB 1515)

### I voted NO

This high-profile bill relates to jurisdiction of the Washington State Human Rights Commission. It would have prohibited discrimination in housing, insurance and employment based on sexual orientation. I do not endorse bigotry or discrimination in any way. That's

why I support existing state law that already prohibits discrimination. Creating a separate protected class of people based on sexual orientation is unnecessary. The bill failed.

Initiative 677 was identical to this bill and 62 percent of voters in Kitsap, Mason, Thurston and Grays Harbor counties opposed it in 1997.

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## Simple Majority (SB 5144)

### I voted NO

This bill would have reduced the vote necessary to approve school bonds and levies from 60 percent to 50 percent. An amendment that would have required school elections to run only on the November ballot was opposed by those in favor of the bill. I believe that a 50 percent requirement would allow the state to step further away from its responsibility to fund schools and push more of its financial responsibility on to local school districts and local citizens. Poorer school districts will suffer the most if this measure is enacted into law.

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Senator

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Legislative Report

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